

REMARKS**STATUS OF THE CLAIMS**

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 have been amended. Claims 1-30 are pending and under consideration.

No new matter is being presented, and approval of the amended claims is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-30 FOR OBVIOUSNESS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER OKADA ET AL. (U.S. PATENT NO. 6,393,461) IN VIEW OF BUNNEY ET AL. (U.S. PATENT NO. 6,446,112)

The rejections of claims 1-30 are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Okada et al. (hereinafter "Okada") discloses providing a user's instruction to an agent in a chat channel to read out a log file, and viewing, by means of a URL received from the agent, a chat log on a Web page which contains a chat log in the past and a chat log in which the user did not participate.

The Examiner notes that Okada does not disclose a table storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said virtual communication spaces. Hence, the Examiner cites Bunney et al. (hereinafter "Bunney") as teaching this feature.

The Examiner further notes that means for determining a part of said character-train information to be used as an identifier of the person is inherently implied in a system that uses character-train information to identify the person.

In Bunney, in response to a command from a chat client, conversion means of the chat proxy 39 converts the command, and gets from the session manager 23 a unique nickname with the maximum nine characters of the user, which corresponds to a user ID in IRC. The session manager 23 accesses the session database, and provides this nickname to only the current online user. The nickname does not need to be unique across time and space. The user who logs into the connection manager can use a disposable, or on-time nickname, which is effective only during the login. (See Column 11, lines 25-49).

On page 4 of the Action, the Examiner states that Table 6 (Fig. 3) of Bunney stores identifiers of persons using said virtual communication spaces, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. The notification server 29 of Bunney collaborates with the session manager 23 to determine who is currently online and available, and delivers mail messages. Thus, Table 6 of Bunney is merely provided for sending a notification to an e-mail address of the user to notify the arrival of a new e-mail at another corresponding e-mail address, which the user did not use to log on, but also belongs to the user. (See column 9, lines 12-20 and column 10, lines 1-12). Table 6 is used only for sending a notification of the arrival of e-mail.

In contrast, the present invention associates identifiers or names of virtual communication spaces with identifiers of persons (user IDs) and with character-train information of persons (display names), to thereby provide different display names for the respective virtual communication spaces formed on a chat system.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Bunney fails to teach or suggest a table storing therein, in association with each other, identifiers of persons using said virtual communication spaces, identifiers of said virtual communication spaces and corresponding character-train information of the persons, said character trains being used as said message sender identifying information; and means for determining a character train, among said character-train information, to be used in a corresponding one of said plurality of virtual communication spaces for a designated one of said identifiers of the person, in accordance with an association of said designated identifier of the person and an identifier of said one virtual communication space with the part of said character-train information in said table means, as recited in amended claim 1.

That is, Bunney does not provide use of the different display names for a user for respective corresponding virtual communication spaces, as disclosed by the present invention as recited in claim 1.

Independent claims 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 include similar amendments and, therefore, in view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the independent claims 1, 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24 and 27 are allowable over the references and rejections of record.

Dependent claims 2-8, 10-11, 14-17, 19-20, 22-23, 25-26 and 28-30 inherit the patentable recitations of their respective base claims and, thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims patentably distinguish over the prior art.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. Further, all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

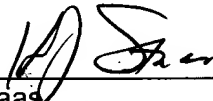
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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